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TODA CULTURE THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER: AN ACCULTURATION STUDY [1]

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The Todas of the Nilgiri Hills in South India have long been an object of interest to anthropologists. They became known to Europeans early in the 19th century when the hills were visited by Sullivan (1813), and since then they have been written about by many officials as well as by more casual visitors. Finally, in 1901–2 a close study was made of their institutions by W. H. R. Rivers, and his treatise *The Todas*, published in 1906, has been since then an anthropological classic, describing as it does a tribe of pastoralists with a culture very aberrant as compared with that of the rest of India. Centred upon the buffalo,

[1] My work on the Todas was done with the aid of the American Council of Learned Societies in 1935–6 and of the American Philosophical Society (Penrose Fund) in 1936–7. Dr. D. G. Mandelbaum has read over the paper and given me the benefit of his suggestions and criticisms.

Bibliographical details of the publications referred to in the paper are:

W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas*; London, Macmillan and Co., 1906.

M. B. Emeneau, *The Songs of the Todas*, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 77. 543–560.

id., *Toda Garments and Embroidery*, Journal of the American Oriental Society 57. 377–389.

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the care of which forms a very complex ritual, and containing within itself such an unusual feature as polyandry, this culture was bound to attract attention as a thing *sui generis* in the field of knowledge of anthropologists. Work on the language of the tribe in 1935–7 has given me an opportunity to study the culture as well. The present paper attempts to assess the amount and nature of such changes as the culture has suffered in the thirty-five years since Rivers' visit.

In 1901–2, the Todas were already exposed to outside influences of several different kinds. Leaving aside their immemorial connexion with the Kotas and the Kurumbas, these three tribes regarding themselves as being the aboriginal inhabitants of the hills and as having been created there together, and their more recent but still ancient connexion with the immigrant Badagas, two other strong influences had been in a position to affect Toda culture from the time that the Nilgiris became accessible early in the 19th century. The English, who created three hill-stations, Ootacamund, Coonoor, and Kotagiri, and a military station Wellington, provided one of these influences, and their Indian servants, minor officials, and tradespeople, an even stronger influence. Since Rivers' time conditions in the hills have changed so that outside influences have become potentially much stronger. A railway now connects Ootacamund and Coonoor with the Tamilian plains to the south and motorbuses connect the whole area with the Mysore plains. The possibilities of the Nilgiris as a suitable ground for growing vegetable produce and tea have been exploited to a high degree. Their attractions as holiday grounds for Europeans and a place of retirement at the end of official life have been certainly not more widely appreciated, but perhaps more widely used by Europeans from all parts of India. The climax of this tendency of the English to invade the Nilgiris

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id., *Personal names of the Todas*, American Anthropologist, April 1938.
id., *An Echo-word Motif in Dravidian Folk-tales*, Journal of the American Oriental Society (not yet published).
Census of India, 1931, vol. 14 (Madras), part 1 (report by M. W. M. Yeatts), 387–392.
[M. B. Emeneau, *Toda Marriage Regulations and Taboos*, American Anthropologist 39. 103–112. This completes the list of my papers on the Todas up to date, but is not referred to in this paper.]

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for short or longer periods has however been passed and with changed political conditions it is evident that the European population will suffer a decline. Well-to-do Indians have also felt the attractions, climatic or other, of the Nilgiri hill-stations: whether the climax of their migration has been reached it is difficult to say. The specific differences between the influences of Rivers' time and those of today are to be seen, not so much in the influence exerted on the hill cultures by the Europeans, as in the ever-increasing numbers of Indians from the plains, mostly low-caste Tamil and Kannada speakers who are agricultural laborers, but also Mohammedans from various areas, including Pashto-speaking money-lenders from the far north, as well as traders, especially Marwaris from the Bombay Presidency and Chettis from the Tamil area.

It will throw some light on the nature of Toda culture if an attempt is made to assess the effects of these various influences on the life of the Todas, insofar as there has been an effect. A general examination of changes that have taken place in Toda culture since Rivers' time will also be of value, both in itself and as providing evidence by which some of Rivers' hypotheses may be evaluated. The treatment may be divided into three major sections—economic life, social organization, and religion. At some points a comparison may usefully be made between the state of Toda culture at the present time and the state of the Kota and the Badaga cultures in the corresponding departments.

The economic life of the Todas is that department which has felt the impact of outside influences most strongly. The basis on which the economic life is founded is the herds of buffaloes. A great part of the diet of the tribe is made up of milk, buttermilk, and ghee. In this respect incidentally they offer a marked contrast to most of the south Indian communities, among whom cattle-products are too frequently neglected as a source of nourishing food. Besides this, the Todas require grain-food and of these rice and millet are the chief. In the days before the hills were opened up, grain was acquired from the Badagas chiefly, and the method, still followed, was for a Toda to go to the Badaga village with which his sib was connected and levy contributions, so much from each house. Rice seems to have been obtained

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from the plains on the Tamilian side of the hills, either directly or through Kurumba middlemen. The details of these last transactions have been almost entirely forgotten through disuse. At the present time rice is obtained in the bazaars of Ootacamund and probably Kotagiri, chiefly from the Chettis, who also supply all the cloaks worn by the Todas and the waistcloths put on corpses at funerals, as well as many other articles. These articles are paid for chiefly with milk and ghee. While the milk of sacred buffaloes is too sacred to be thus profaned, the sanctity has been removed by the time it reaches the ghee-stage, and ghee may be sold, irrespective of its origin. The transactions with the Chettis are not allowed by them to be profitable to the Todas. If a Toda has only a few buffaloes, he is always in debt. And even a Toda with a fair number of buffaloes will usually be in debt. This starts during the dry season when the buffaloes give little milk and ghee is scarce. The Chetti is usually asked for credit and once this begins, the Toda can seldom free himself even if he suffers no accidental misfortune such as the death of a buffalo. The complicated transfers of buffaloes at ceremonies undoubtedly play a large part in the impoverishment of many Todas, as well as the slaughter of buffaloes at funerals, and certain ceremonies involving feasts complete the process. Under this system of traffic in the bazaar the Todas as a tribe are never free of debt. When the Toda Amelioration Scheme was initiated some years ago under the aegis of Government, it was considered that the first step to be taken was the paying off of the Todas' debts and this was done by Government. The Scheme was unsuccessful (see below) and the debts have grown again.

The Badagas, as has been said above, still continue their contributions to the Todas, while the Todas supply them with a small amount of produce and make various other small returns. The economic interchange between Kotas and Todas continues. This takes the form chiefly of a supply of tools and pots and the playing of music at funerals by the Kotas, and in return they acquire the carcasses and hides of the buffaloes slaughtered at funerals, a certain amount of ghee, and occasionally other articles. In both cases it seems probable that the Todas are the gainers in the total of transactions. The continuance of these interchanges

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is remarkable when we consider that the interchange between Badagas and Kotas has broken down almost entirely. This latter break-down however is primarily due to religious changes in the Badaga community. One of the main services supplied by Kotas to Badagas was music at funerals. The majority of the Badagas have reformed their customs in this respect and no longer requiring music and having a convenient source of tools and pots at hand in the bazaars, this section of the Badagas has repudiated with some heat all connexions with the Kota community, especially as the Kotas by expanding their agricultural activities and aspiring to a higher status in the hierarchy of the tribes of the hills have come into quarrelsome conflict with the Badagas. That the Todas have not broken off relations with the Kotas is probably due primarily to their adherence to the old system of acquiring tools and pots and to their desire for the Kota music at funerals. Even this latter item may arise in the future as a source of conflict, since the anti-music tendency of the Badagas has begun to infect the Kotas, or at least one of their most articulate reformers. He is however at present an object of great suspicion to the conservative members of the Kota community and it is improbable that the Todas will be deprived of their funeral music until a fairly remote future. The two tribes do not come into economic conflict, as do the Badagas and the Kotas, nor do Kota caste-aspirations bring them into conflict with the Todas, who as the highest ranking aboriginal community of the hills are immeasurably above the Kotas in their own estimation and look upon the Kota aspirations, if they pay any attention to them at all, with a lordly disdain. My Kota informant, the above-mentioned reformer, has also observed to me rather pathetically that the Todas are a friendly people while the Kotas are quarrelsome, and it is probable that this lordly condescension of the Todas keeps the Kotas on friendly terms with them, while the pushing, *nouveau riche* attitude easily observed in the Badagas antagonises a caste like the Kotas who having a relatively low position yet do not feel themselves much inferior to the Badagas and certainly will not openly admit any inferiority.

The land basis of Toda economic life is pasturage for the herds. This has been affected adversely by the influx of immi-

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177 233 423 grants, both Indian and European, in the last century, and by the expansion of Badaga agricultural activity. Curtailment of the pasturage areas must have been appreciable even in the days when only the Badagas were agriculturalists in the hills. It is difficult to make out how serious a matter this had become by the beginning of the 19th century. Since then the matter has become serious indeed. First settlement by the English at Ootacamund, Coonoor, and Wellington necessitated purchase of land from the Todas. The sib of the unkitjo:ʃ (Rivers' Pām; for details see p. 658) thus lost its chief village and of course the pasture-lands there. So also the two sibs of the ka:ɕo:ʃ and melga:-ɕo:ʃ lost a number of villages and the surrounding pastures where Ootacamund now stands, and the two villages from which these sibs take their names are now actually within the area of the municipality with restricted pastures. In other directions pasturages have been alienated, either to the Badagas when they were vigorously extending their fields for the production of vegetables for the markets or to Europeans who bought land for tea-plantations or for other purposes, the most recent of which has been the construction of a dam on the Pykara river and an electric power line over the hills. Most frequently these sales involved land in the lower margins of the plateau, and the high downs to the west of Ootacamund where villages cluster most thickly have not been seriously affected. Alienation can take place only with the consent of Government and this is charily given if it vitally affects the Todas' best interests. It is of some importance also that the hunting of jackals with horses and hounds has been a favorite sport of the English in the Nilgiris and has influenced them in preserving the downs as open country. Two separate major alienations have taken place within the last fifty years. In one case the lands belonging to two associated dairies of the highest grade (the ti:-dairies), one of the ka:ɕo:ʃ sib, the other of the mö:ɕo:ʃ sib, which had not been used for a number of years, were disposed of to the Church of England Zenana Mission for cultivation by the Toda Christian Colony. In the other case two pasturages of the ti: of the ka:ɕo:ʃ sib were sold to Government and are now incorporated in a forest reserve; these were sold when the sib of the ka:ɕo:ʃ were in need of a large sum of money to settle parkume's liability in the suicide of nörnmɛ. In general,

177 233 425 [614] [311] [797] [614] [684]

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the impression is gained that if Government did not keep a close watch on Toda land, either from a concern for Toda welfare or from a desire to preserve the amenities of the Nilgiris, and prevent the free play of economic pressure, the pastures would soon all be alienated, or at any rate to such an extent that the economic life of the Todas would be severely prejudiced. Toda economic life is to this important extent artificially hedged off from the interference of outside influences and preserved from total disruption. Sir Athelstane Baines' remark that the Todas are "stall-fed aborigines" is in this respect entirely justified. [1]

The Toda Amelioration Scheme was mentioned above in connexion with the payment of Toda debts. The other chief feature of the plan was to induce the Todas to grow potatoes and to work this agricultural enterprise and the sale of their ghee through two cooperative societies. The advantages of the Scheme appealed to a number of the chief men, and some of the superficial benefits made a remarkable appeal to less responsible Todas as a method of getting something for nothing. The scheme broke down on its really vulnerable point. The Todas are pastoralists with no tradition of agriculture and the continuous back-breaking labor it demands, and the attempt to make agriculturalists of them while their own pastoral occupation was still in full working order could not with any confidence have been expected to succeed. [2] Those few who personally engaged themselves in the work found that it went so against their habits that two years of it were more than enough. The majority merely hired outsiders to do the manual labor for them, or sold the seed-potatoes and tools that were advanced to them by the societies. No trace of the Scheme now remains.

Casual employment as beaters for English sportsmen brings in a small, irregular income to a few Todas. The Maharaja of Mysore each year engages fifteen men of the tribe to act as an ornamental bodyguard at his palace in Ootacamund. Some few

[1] Sir Athelstane Baines *Ethnography (Castes and Tribes.)* [Grundriss der Indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde II. 5], 125. [113]

[2] See also the Census officer in 1931 (reference in note 1) for the same judgment on the scheme.

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648 434 Todas who have no buffaloes and no means of making a sufficient living within the tribal structure find employment on tea-estates. Others who live near Ootacamund make their living by tending cattle, an occupation congenial to pastoralists. In most cases they live in their own villages and do not find their participation in the communal life of the tribe too much restricted by their extra-tribal economic activities.

595 114 In matters of social oraganization no change of any great importance can be found since Rivers made his investigations. The marriage system seems to work quite as it did then, fraternal polyandry modified by polygyny. Rivers' prediction that in time monogamy would prevail is not yet fulfilled. Though it is impossible without a statistical study of Rivers' genealogies brought up to date to make any valid statement concerning the decrease or otherwise of polyandry, I have got no information that would lead me to believe that the institution is a dying one.

588 616 In conjunction with the normal marriage system, in which each of the moieties of the tribe is endogamous, there is another institution, whereby a man from one moiety lives with a woman of the other moiety, each member of the couple having as well his or her legal spouse. Any children resulting from this union are reckoned for all purposes as children of the woman by her husband within her own moiety. In fact, if a man resembles closely his [578] mother's lover (called moxθo:tjfoj o:l), this fact may be thrown up to him as an insult ("son of so-and-so [the mother's lover] !").

584 588 616 178 Rivers' described (p. 534) how the headman kum:ja:lf made an innovation by taking a wife from the moiety not his own, or rather by taking a woman, as he was entitled to do, by the moxθo:tjfoj institution but insisting on giving compensation for her to her husband as if she were a woman of his own moiety, i. e. by treating her as his legal wife. This innovation made a great impact on Toda consciousness and is still spoken of and referred to in any songs about kum:ja:lf or the children of this union. The example was followed in ku^{m}:ja:lf's lifetime by several men, but all these unions have been dissolved by death, and since ku^{m}:ja:lf's death no fresh example has been allowed by the chief men of the tribe. The innovation, which if continued would probably

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have had far-reaching social consequences,[1] has been stamped out, and almost the only trace remains in the persons of kum:ə-jaḷf's children by this union, who are still spoken of as his children though legally they belong to the other moiety. kum:ə-jaḷf, who was a man of great force and influence, was able to go against the long-established custom of the tribe, but as soon as his influence was removed, conservatism prevailed.

One Toda interest of high rating is the catching of buffaloes at funerals. The men who are to catch the buffaloes line up at a spot which is fixed for each funeral-place and at a given signal all drop their garments and sprint for the swamp where the buffaloes have been stationed. Great honor attaches to the man who wins in this race and reaches the buffaloes first, and honor also goes to those who handle the buffaloes most skilfully when they are caught and being brought to the spot where they are to be killed. Women are inclined to grant sexual favors more often and more readily to young men who are known for their prowess in this matter. Even old men who can no longer compete with the young ones in running demand an opportunity to catch buffaloes. Arrangements are usually made to give them their chance. Certain buffaloes are assigned to certain old men, who then take their seats near these buffaloes and catch them while the young men are running for and catching the others. Quarrels frequently arise on this account, since the young men grudge the

[1] While it is futile to speculate on what might have been, yet it is interesting to trace in a mechanical manner the primary results if this innovation had been carried through so that it became the only allowable type of marriage, no other change taking place and all the present rules of paternity and of residence remaining in force. Organization would have been as follows. The tribe would consist of two exogamous moieties. A man would be legally the son, not of his mother's husband, but of her male cross-cousin within her own moiety, since at present cross-cousin marriage is the preferred type for a woman's first marriage. Since a woman of the tɔuɬ̪j moiety may not live at, or even enter, a village of the to:rθaṛ moiety and no woman has any ceremonial function in connexion with the buffaloes and the dairy cult, the present villages of the to:rθaṛ moiety would be abandoned as dwelling places but would be ceremonially and economically important as the places where the dairy operations and rituals of certain herds were carried on. Ownership in these herds as well as in the herds of the most sacred grade of dairies, the ti:- dairies, which now belong to the to:rθaṛ moiety, would descend to a man of this moiety from his mother's male cross-cousin within her moiety. All of which is complicated, but not impossible.

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old ones this opportunity and sometimes catch the old men's assigned animals before the latter can reach them. Old men retaliate sometimes by stepping in when the young men are unable to control a buffalo that has been caught. In the latter case the old man is inclined to boast inordinately of his prowess. Great speed in running and skill in catching buffaloes is celebrated in the songs. Adventitious rewards are occasionally given to the winner in the race for the buffaloes. E. g. about twenty years ago at the funeral of kanmṣ (Rivers' genealogical table 63), kuṃ·jaff, the headman of the tribe, offered a fine cloak to the winner in the race. It was won by kemods (21), who still dwells on this proof of his former prowess. If this interest needs any buttressing, it has recently been provided by the Ootacmund Hunt, which initiated in 1936 at the point-to-point race meet a cross-country running race for Todas. In that year and in 1937 the race was of about a mile and a quarter over rolling downs. It was won both years in remarkably fast time by a young man, who was said at the time to have gone to the Kurumbas beforehand for charms to help him to win. This innovation, which will no doubt last as long as the Ootacamund Hunt, merely adds another small item to a highly-developed interest and fits well into the Toda pattern.

Toda men's costume has been affected to a slight extent by the influence of the immigrant plainspeople. I have already described the proper Toda clothes in my paper *Toda Garments and Embroidery*. In addition to these most men nowadays wear a shirt under the cloak in the manner made familiar to them by the Indians in the bazaar. A turban of bright-colored cloth or silk is also affected, by headmen usually and by all others who can afford it for festal occasions. That this is a borrowing is easily seen from the clumsy efforts that the men make in tying the turban and from the lack of any uniform style in the result. Some young men also wear a bright-colored neckerchief knotted in front as a fairly regular part of their costume; this is a very recent innovation and seems to be an independent invention. None of these new garments may be worn when the men go inside the walls surrounding the dairies. The waistcloth, though it seems to be an innovation of about a century ago, is worn near

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the dairy; this contrasts with the rule of the Kotas that the waistcloth must be discarded on going within the Kota temple areas.

Other sociological phenomena need not be touched upon in detail; accounts that I have been given of various of them agree entirely with River's accounts.

Since Rivers' time one sib of the tɔrθaʂ moiety has come near extinction, viz. the nirɲɔ:ʃ found in Rivers' genealogical tables 40–43. The family in table 41 has been extinguished entirely by the death of its last male members. The only male member still surviving of the family in table 42 is a Christian, and this family is regarded as extinguished. In 40 and 43 each family is represented now by a male infant and a Christian male. It is unlikely that the three Christians originally of this sib will return to the tribe since they were very young when they became members of the Christian community. The sib must be carried on by the two infants and if they should survive and have sons, the organization of the sib into the divisions called kum:ʂ (pp. 542–4) will remain as it is now; otherwise, a new division will be necessary, as will in any case a new pɔ:lm division (pp. 544–6), or the sib may be wholly extinguished.

In the matter of religious institutions, I can again find no change, though my more intimate, linguistic approach enables me to place the emphasis in some cases at different points from those which Rivers stressed and to present an amplified and better balanced picture of the religious system as a whole than that of Rivers. I shall not here go into much detail, merely presenting a sketchy outline of the religious picture as my material yields it and touching on some points where Rivers thought that he could observe tendencies to change.

The religion of the Todas is a highly ritualized buffalo-cult. Every important operation connected with the buffaloes is conducted according to rule, the milking and converting the milk successively into butter and ghee, giving salt to the buffaloes, taking them on migration to fresh pastures, burning over the pastures, giving a buffalo a name when it has calved for

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the first time,[1] introducing new utensils into the dairy and preparing new coagulant for the milk, rebuilding and rethatching the dairy, consecrating dairymen, and even drinking buttermilk from the dairy. All the rules apply to the sacred buffaloes; ordinary ones are treated with much less ceremony. Infractions of the rules involve pollution, and most of the precautions surrounding the cult seem designed to prevent pollution of the milk by contact with profane persons or utensils. The milk, as the primary product, is most liable to pollution and the successive operations finally result in ghee, which possesses so little sanctity that it can be sold to outsiders.

Rivers (pp. 447–9) dealt with the various elements of the dairy-cult which might conceivably be regarded as divinities, the dairy, the bell, the buffaloes, and the poɔ:l, the priest of the most sacred grade of dairy, the ti:. He rightly rejected all these as being divinities for the Todas. Finally, in a paragraph on p. 449, he attempted to grapple with the problem of the Toda divinities. He said: "Each clan is believed to have its nódrodchi, or ruling deity, but I could not learn what he is supposed to do. In general the nódrodchi of a clan is a god dwelling on a hill near the chief village of the clan, and two clans living near one another may have the same ruler..... Little can be said about the nature of these connexions between gods and clans, but it is possible that when a clan or a member of a clan is said to incur the anger of the gods it is the nódrodchi who is chiefly offended and inflicts punishment in the form of death or disease to man or buffalo." This neglects one very important set of divinities. Rivers failed to discriminate between two different classes of divinities, the tõuθut and the tõuno:ɪ. The Todas are not very articulate on the distinction when pressed for information in general terms, but the distinction is implicit in all that is said on the subject and becomes very explicit in the language of the songs.

[1] This ceremony, the mɪrɔ:lɪmɔt, is performed for a sacred buffalo only and only at its first calving; Rivers (p. 173) is to be corrected on this point. The essential part of the ceremony is the name-giving. When the calf is released from the calf-shed and allowed to go to its mother to be suckled, the dairyman says the name, e. g. kaɪθum, and then strikes the buffalo three times with the wand, saying hɔ̃: at each stroke (p. 173 top). Before this ceremony the buffalo is classed as no:-m, after it as mɪ,

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Most of the deities who are named and of whom stories are told are the töuθuṯ and it is about these that Rivers acquired much information. They are "the mountains (tuṯ) which are gods (töu)," and with them we may include the river deities. They are very real to the Todas; for details I refer to Rivers, since little that is new on these gods has come to me. But they are not the gods of the sibs. They have connexions with the villages of the sibs (the villages are called *mod*, Englished as "mund"), e. g. tökiȷ created most of the Toda institutions at the mund noːṛ and this connexion is kept very much in mind. They may also be offended against, and diviners may and do sometimes say that such and such misfortunes have come to a man because he has so offended, especially against the river gods by breaking the regulations concerning the crossing of rivers. But these töuθuṯ are not the most important gods to the Todas.

The töunoːṛ are by all odds the most present divinities in Toda consciousness. These are the gods of the munds, or rather of the dairy-complexes localized at munds. Most munds consist of one or more dairies, buffalo-pens, and other appurtenances of the dairy-cult, together with several houses in which the people live. The dairy section of the mund is the töunoːṛ and it is clear from the song-phraseology and the prayers that it is not only the dairies that are denoted by this term, but the whole dairy-complex associated with the dairies. The prayers are made up of names of everything connected with the complex, dairies, sacred buffaloes, pens, calf-sheds, bells, utensils and tools used in the dairies, and coagulant. The dairyman in that he is the servant of the complex is to this extent connected with it. The complex may suffer pollution in any of its parts, and for this reason women, who are the chief source of pollution, are rigorously separated from the complex and not allowed to approach it from the house across a line that is marked by a stone or stones. The houses in fact are designated as aːṛ as opposed to the dairy section of the mund which is noːṛ "sacred place." Within the noːṛ it cannot be discovered that any element is the local seat of the divinity. The linguistic evidence shows that the noːṛ itself is the god. Both songs and ordinary speech refer to the sacred part of the mund as töu "god" or noːṛ "sacred place" or töunoːṛ, a compound of the two words denoting "the sacred place which

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is a god." Likewise mod "mund" and noːṛ "sacred place" may be used as equivalent terms in songs. We must conclude that the "sacred place" and the "god" are the same thing, the localized dairy-complex. Examples of song-phraseology are as follows:[1]

noːṛoːelm	kuːtjuθnoːṛ
sacred places-all	to which she gathered-sacred place
tõuoːelm	"
gods-all	"

i. e. "(noːṛ), the sacred place to which the goddess tõːkiɲj gathered all the sacred places, all the gods."

moɾeθaɾm	kumɨtmθnoːṛ
children-charity	which gave-sacred place
uɾeθaɾm	"
buffaloes-charity	"

i. e. "the place (or, god) which gave children and buffaloes in abundance."

noṛɛxuːdtk	piːmθnoːṛ
sacred places-meeting-to	which went-sacred place
tõuenoːṛtk	"
gods-meeting-to	"

i. e. "the sacred place (or, god) which went to the assembly of the sacred places, of the gods." The assembly to which the gods go is held in the dairy of the mund myːnj to settle disputes and matters of interest to the gods. Here all the gods, the tõuθɯṭ, the tõunoːṛ, and the gods of the Hindu pantheon, assemble and they are said to be 1600 or 1800 in number.[2] From this the tõunoːṛ are clearly seen to be anthropomorphic, as is also evident since it is said that a tõunoːṛ may become angry and visit misfortune on anyone guilty of polluting that particular dairy-complex.

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[1] See *The Songs of the Todas*, reference given in note 1.

[2] The two numbers make the song-pair; paːrnuːrθõu, puːṭuːrθõu "1600 gods, 1800 gods." That the conception is of fairly ancient standing with the Todas seems clear from the Toda interpretation of the first "holy name (kuəm)" of the mund myːnj, which is paːrnuːm, said to mean "the standing-place (nuːm) of the 1600 gods (represented by paːr for paːrnuːr)." For further discussion of this sacred name, see *Personal names of the Todas* §11.

The dwelling houses form no part of the complex, and so there are tȫuno:ṛ without houses, as is preeminently the case with the highest grade of dairies, the ti:. There may also be munds without dairies, and these are not tȫuno:ṛ. Some munds also which have dairies are not tȫuno:ṛ. They were founded in comparatively recent times because the herds tended at a tȫuno:ṛ became too large and new dairy accommodation had to be built. Their comparative lack of sanctity is indicated by the fragmentary nature of the prayers used at them and by the fact that a dairyman-priest may not be ordained for them but must be ordained for one of the tȫuno:ṛ of the sib and after serving there for a short time must go on to the less sacred place. This type of mund as well as those without dairies are known as maxmoḍ, as opposed to the tȫuno:ṛ, which are mtumḍmoḍ "important or chief mund." In each case a tȫuno:ṛ is said to have been founded in the beginning by the tȫuθuṭ associated with the sib, a maxmoḍ to have been a human creation. [347] [798] [793]

When a tȫuno:ṛ is entirely abandoned and its dairy no longer used, the Todas may revive it after a period of as long as fifty years or even longer. This usually happens because the diviners so order it when misfortune has overtaken the sib or because a buffalo wanders to the abandoned site and the diviners interpret its actions as directed by the tȫuno:ṛ who wishes the people to cease their neglect. The Todas in their religious thinking have not found it necessary to speculate about the fate of a tȫuno:ṛ when a mund is never revived. Nor are they troubled by the question of the relationship between the sacred buffaloes of a sib and the various dairy-complexes at which they are tended. Each sib operates a number of complexes and the same buffaloes may be kept at any of them in turn. [791] [614]

When Rivers said that each sib has a "ruling deity," he referred to the tȫuθuṭ. The Toda phrase which he gave, nȫdrodchi, i. e. no:ṛo:ḍci-, means "(the deity, i. e. the tȫuθuṭ) ruled, or owned, the sacred place," or as one informant translated "used the mund." For each "chief mund" (mtumḍmoḍ or tȫuno:ṛ) was created, as we have said, by a tȫuθuṭ who founded the dairy operations there and carried them on in the beginning. [614]

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Rivers says (p. 452): "The present state of the Toda religion seems to be one in which ritual has persisted while the beliefs at the bottom of the ritual have largely disappeared." By "beliefs" he referred to the stories of those gods, such as tö:kiȷ and the rest, whom we have shown above to be the töuθuṭ. Since they are distinct from the töunoɔ̈, it is clear that the ritual of the dairy-complex has no connexion with the beliefs about the töuθuṭ. It is true that the dairy-complexes are of much greater interest to the Toda than the other gods, but these latter have quite as much power to cause misfortune as the former, opportunities only arising less frequently. We may probably see in the highly developed ritual of the dairies a product of long accretion, starting originally no doubt from the fairly general Indian belief in the sanctity of cattle. The steps by which this grew into the present cult cannot be discovered. But if this is the origin of the Toda ritualised dairy-practice, we need not expect anything more in the way of beliefs than we actually find, viz. anecdotes to explain anomalies of various dairy-complexes. Long origin stories are lacking, everything being referred either to these anecdotes for a few abnormal details or to creation in general terms by tö:kiȷ and the other töuθuṭ for the general scheme of things. It is possible that tö:kiȷ and the gods associated with her represent an older layer of belief than the dairy-complex gods, but no evidence is forthcoming other than the chronology given in the Toda myths. About the former gods, the töuθuṭ, stories are still told in the vague way of which Rivers complained (p. 453 middle). But this vagueness is really merely a sketchiness of detail that I have found in all Toda story-telling, arising from a lack of interest in the story-telling technique, not from a lack of interest in the stories (see my paper *An Echo-word Motif in Dravidian Folk-tales*). There is no reason to suppose that the stories of the old gods will ever be forgotten while the tribe survives.

Into the close-knit nexus of the Toda dairy-complex no change is likely to come except in matters of detail, and no such change since Rivers' time is known to me. Short of complete abandonment of the system it is hard to conceive of any radical alteration. But, as was already noted by Rivers (pp. 453-4, worship of Hindu deities can go on "side by side with the proper religion of the Todas."

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worship of Hindu deities can go on "side by side with the proper religion of the Todas." Vows are made to temples for increase of the buffaloes, for speedy completion of the rebuilding of a dairy, for children or for other objects. If the boon asked for is obtained, the promised vow is fulfilled; otherwise, not. In most cases a man when paying the vow goes to the temple to which it has been made, shaves his hair and beard, bathes, and hands over to the temple the gift he has promised, a small silver image of a buffalo or a dairy or a sum of money. Fashions change in temples, according as reputation for power rises or falls. Certain temples very near the hills have been visited in paying vows for a very long time. Visits to Nanjangud in Mysore State began according to my informants less than a century ago. Vows to Mariamma's temple in Ootacamund have been made only in very recent times. Most curious is the making of vows to the mosque at Nagore, on the coast east of Tanjore. This holy-place was learned of from Mohammedan ghee-merchants in Ootacamund. The first vow by a Toda to this place was made by nörnmṣ (Rivers' genealogical table 20) and paid after his death by his classificatory son airjar; this was before Rivers' time. One of my informants went there in 1929 by train and gave a silver buffalo in payment of his vow. Such offerings of images are apparently accepted and no doubt sold at a yearly auction of offerings, as in Hindu temples. Toda vows to a Mohammedan shrine are an excellent illustration of the syncretistic tendencies of unlettered peoples in India. The Todas, who know well enough that the place of worship in Nagore is a Mohammedan mosque, do not regard it as any different from a Hindu temple that has shown itself to be powerful in granting boons. They call the deity there a töu and it seems that it is really a Mohammedan saint buried at the mosque who is supposed to be the god of the place.

Apart from the outside influence just discussed, the only other influence that I have been able to find shows itself in a theological belief already mentioned by Rivers (p. 456). This is to the effect that the supreme god is sōmṣ (indirectly borrowed from Sanskrit svāmin), and all the other gods are his servants. So it was phrased by kimmṣ (Rivers' genealogical table 26; one

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of the oldest men in the tribe and now dead; see *Toda Garments and Embroidery*, note 2) when theology was once being discussed in my presence. This belief has no influence on the formulas of Toda ritual, and is clearly quite extraneous to the proper cult. It is undoubtedly a borrowing from other Hindu communities, as is the frequent use of the vocative so:mi: as an expletive of surprise and wonder. Christian missionary teaching seems to have had no influence at all on Toda belief and practices.

It is of some interest to enquire why the Todas have not set up in their villages shrines of Hindu deities. It might seem that the nature of the munds, explained above, consisting of a sacred part which is itself a god and a profane part where carriers of pollution, especially women, live, would preclude the admission of a Hindu deity. Such an argument however is quite irrelevant, and would undoubtedly have no weight if the occasion ever arose when the need of setting up a shrine was felt. In general, such shrines or temples are not set up in South India at random. A Hindu god in the mind of rustic and unlettered communities is definitely associated with the spot where his temple is, and will move to another spot only if he so wills it and makes known his will through a diviner or other person who is possessed of this god. This was the case when the Kotas of one of the villages some years ago at a time of epidemic brought to their village a new trinity of gods, who are said to have come from Karaimadai in the plains. These new gods spoke through a man who is now one of the official diviners of this trinity. He had not before been a diviner. It can hardly be doubted that discussion had previously taken place about the efficacy of the old polyandrous trinity of the village and that the general tension of feeling consequent on the epidemic helped to bring about the possession of the man by the new gods. Incidentally, the presence in this village of two trinities with attributes and ceremonies of the same order has caused an immense amount of friction within the community. The Todas also have their diviners and it is quite conceivable that they should at some time produce utterances with the same purport as those of the above-mentioned Kota. This has not happened so far, and it may be that the present pattern of their utterances makes it improbable that they

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will order the setting up in the munds of Hindu shrines. They now at times of misfortune order propitiation of the tribal gods or the making of vows to temples already established and well known to the Todas. The two outlets are probably sufficient for all Toda needs, though the Kotas, who had much the same two outlets, worship at their own temples and occasional making of vows to Hindu temples, seems to have found them insufficient in a time of stress.

A puzzling point in Toda religion is the calf-sacrifice (Rivers pp. 274-290). Rivers had difficulty in learning anything about it, and I have encountered equal difficulty. I finally succeeded in having a sham performance put on for me in great secrecy. The chief of the two performers said that he had never been present at a sacrifice of this kind, while the other had assisted at the sacrifice at one of the most sacred dairies, the ti:-dairies; the former man also asserted that the calf-sacrifice is extremely rare except at ti:-dairies. Other informants however have stated that it takes place frequently at the munds as well as at the ti:-dairies. My chief informant was probably concealing the truth. One reason why this was so was accidentally dropped by him, that the Todas are ashamed to have it known that they eat meat at this sacrifice. This type of purity as a mark of high caste, if it was not known to the Todas from the beginning of their occupation of the Nilgiris, has perhaps been preached to them by Hindu missionaries or may perhaps have become known to them quite casually from contact with plains Hindus. It seems unlikely however that this is all that is behind the secrecy surrounding the subject, but more information is not to be had. The same secrecy has undoubtedly falsified my records of the songs in several places. The sacrifice should be mentioned in several different contexts, as I discovered late in my field-work. Substitutions of innocuous phrases were made until one of my informants through familiarity became careless and used the proper phrase. I was able in later dictations to prompt the informants, to their slight surprise and discomfort, and to record both the reference to the sacrifice and the attempted substitution.

It will be seen from the preceding discussion that changes in Toda culture due to outside influences have been extremely slight. In religion no changes since Rivers' time are known;

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the chief changes, payment of vows to Hindu temples and a belief in a supreme god, were already firmly established thirty-five years ago, and even these have had little effect on the firm core of Toda religious life, important as the payment of vows is in Toda eyes, since they have been merely additions and have set up no conflicts within the old pattern. In social matters such changes as can be seen are mere surface additions, again causing no conflict within the pattern. The innovation in marriage customs attempted by kumaraiff and recorded by Rivers, which would have produced stress, has been eliminated by the conservatism of the tribe. Most change is seen in economic life, and that in the way of gradual impoverishment through alienation of land and contracting debts in the bazaars, which had set in long before Rivers made his description. Change in the pattern has not yet resulted, in spite of the abortive attempt that was made by the Toda Amelioration Scheme to add agriculture to the life of pastoralists. If a prediction is worth anything, it may be guessed that so long as the economic system is guarded against breakup, as it is now, the tribe will remain as it is now and as it was thirty-five years ago.

There remains the important question of the effect of outside influences on the population figures of the Todas. Rivers in 1906 recorded his conclusion (p. 475): "The Census Reports and the genealogical record agree in pointing to a diminution of the Toda population about the middle of the last century which has now ceased, the probability being that the Todas are increasing slightly in number.....Any decrease....was the direct result of the changes brought about by the advent of Europeans to the Nilgiri Hills." He goes on to refer especially to the influences, injurious to fertility, of syphilis and sexual immorality, and we should surely add gonorrhea. By sexual immorality he seems to mean especially intercourse between women of the tribe and men of other communities. This, though it undoubtedly occurs, is probably of minor importance as compared with the normal system within the tribe. It is probable that the great freedom of sexual intercourse permitted to women by the polyandrous system combined with the *mandjiej* institution by which a woman has at least one "lover" belonging to the other moiety and the freedom to enjoy

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irregular intercourse brings about frequent early miscarriage and perhaps absolute sterility. When we pass to the figures of the actual population, it is found that Rivers' guess that the Todas are increasing slightly in numbers is not borne out by the crude Census figures of 1911, 1921, and 1931.[1] The figures are: in 1901 807, in 1911 676 (which is the corrected figure given by the Census officer after deducting double enumerations), in 1921 640, in 1931 597. It was suggested by the Census officer that the great apparent decline in 1901–11 is in reality due to double enumerations in 1901. The declines in the two succeeding decades are due in large part to epidemics, influenza in 1918–9 and relapsing fever in 1923–4. A subsidiary census in 1927, which yielded the figure of 582 and seems to have been carried out carefully, provides us with two figures which show that between the end of 1927 and the beginning of 1931, with no epidemic intervening, there was a slight increase in population, worked out by the Census officer as equivalent to an increase of about 8¼ per cent for a decade. The lack of vital statistics throws us back on the crude population figures, which are highly unsatisfactory for results that will mean anything. The decade 1931–41 has so far been free from epidemics. If this happy state continues, it may be anticipated that the figures in 1941 will show an increase comparable with that between 1927 and 1931. But the high mortality of the tribe during epidemics, due in part to lack of immunity, but perhaps even more to crude, insanitary living conditions, is a constant danger to the continued existence and functioning of so small a community. The introduction of contagious disease to the community by the immigrant inhabitants of the hills is easily the point where outside influences have made the greatest impact on the Todas.

[1] See *Census of India, 1931*, reference given in note 1.